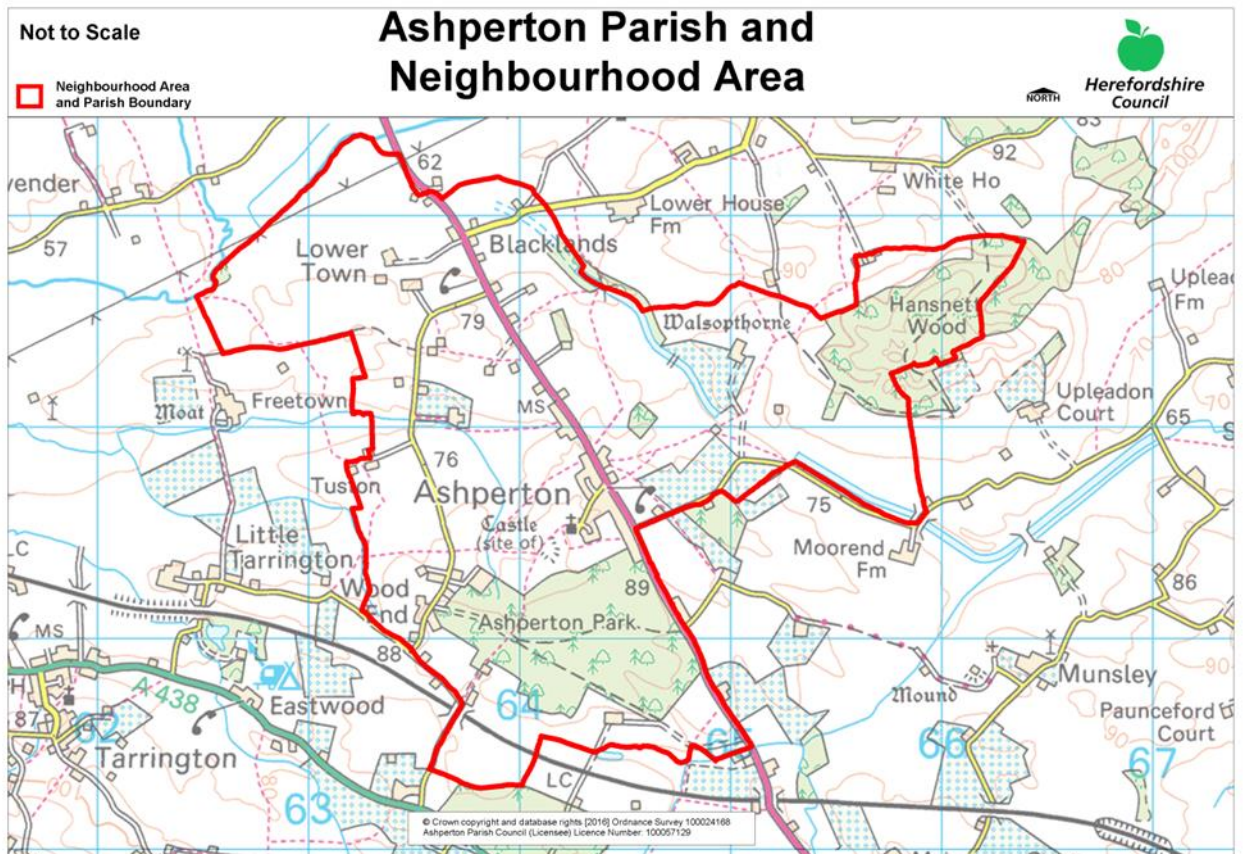


ASHPERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Pre-Submission Draft

May 2017

PREFACE

“This final consultation draft plan is the subject of formal consultation as part of the statutory procedure. That formal consultation must be undertaken before the plan is submitted to Herefordshire Council to be checked for legal compliance and for examination by an independent assessor.

“There will be a formal six week consultation on this draft with residents, interest groups, neighbouring parishes and statutory bodies. Any necessary amendments will then be made before the final plan is submitted to Herefordshire Council.”



Freda Helme, Chair Ashperton Parish Council

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Section 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose

The Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) introducing new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their communities by preparing an Neighbourhood Development Plan through which general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood can be established.

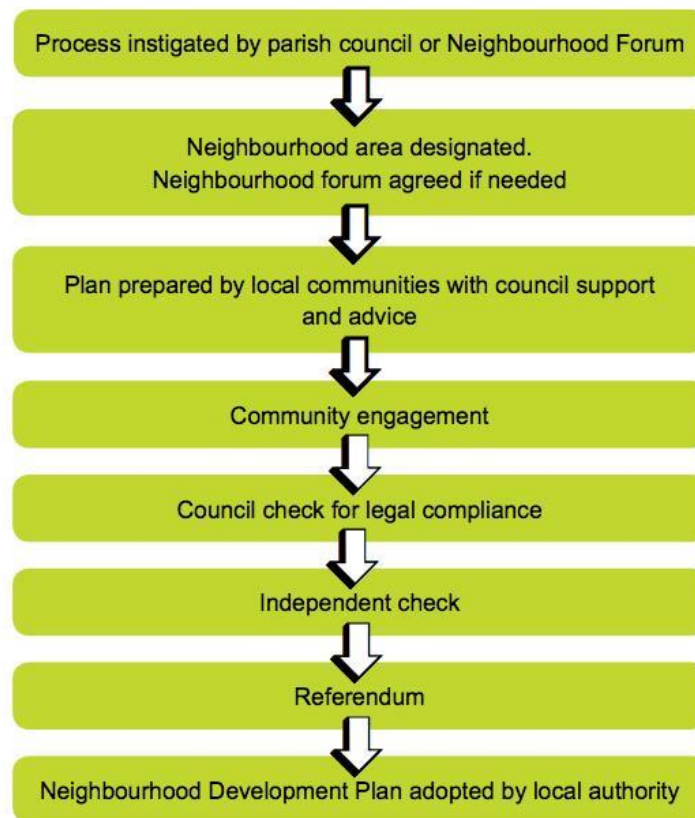
The Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a new type of planning document based on the views of our local residents, businesses, services and community groups, and on the evidence of survey and statistical information concerning the wider area.

The Plan reflects the enthusiasm of the residents, demonstrated throughout the NDP preparation process, for taking the opportunity to make our Parish an even better place in which to live.

Following the formal consultation phase the plan will be submitted to Herefordshire Council who will undertake further consultation and then arrange for an independent examination after which it will be the subject of a local referendum which will ask “Do you want Herefordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ashperton to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?”.

Provided more than 50% of those voting vote ‘yes’ the Plan can move forward towards being formally ‘made’ by Herefordshire Council

Once the Plan has been made the Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan will have the force of law and, as an integral part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire, will become the starting point for deciding what developments should and should not take place in the Parish.



(Strictly speaking neighbourhood development plans are not adopted but “made” by the local authority)

1.2 The Context

Because the Neighbourhood Development Plan will have legal status, the Plan must meet each of a set of basic conditions. The basic conditions are:

- a. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).
- b. having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
- c. having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
- d. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- e. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or

- any part of that area).
- f. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- g. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

The Policies in the Plan take account of these requirements, in particular, that the rural settlements within Ledbury Rural Housing Market Area are required by the Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy RA2 to set minimum housing growth target of 14% between 2011 and 2031.

This draft Plan is submitted by Ashperton Parish Council which is the “qualifying body” defined by the Localism Act 2011. The Plan applies on to the Parish of Ashperton in Herefordshire.

1.3 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

The Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan will run concurrently with the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy and apply until the 31st March 2031. It is, however, a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and it is recognized that challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.

Ashperton Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan Authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery, as described later in the Plan.

Section 2: Our Parish

2.1 Introduction

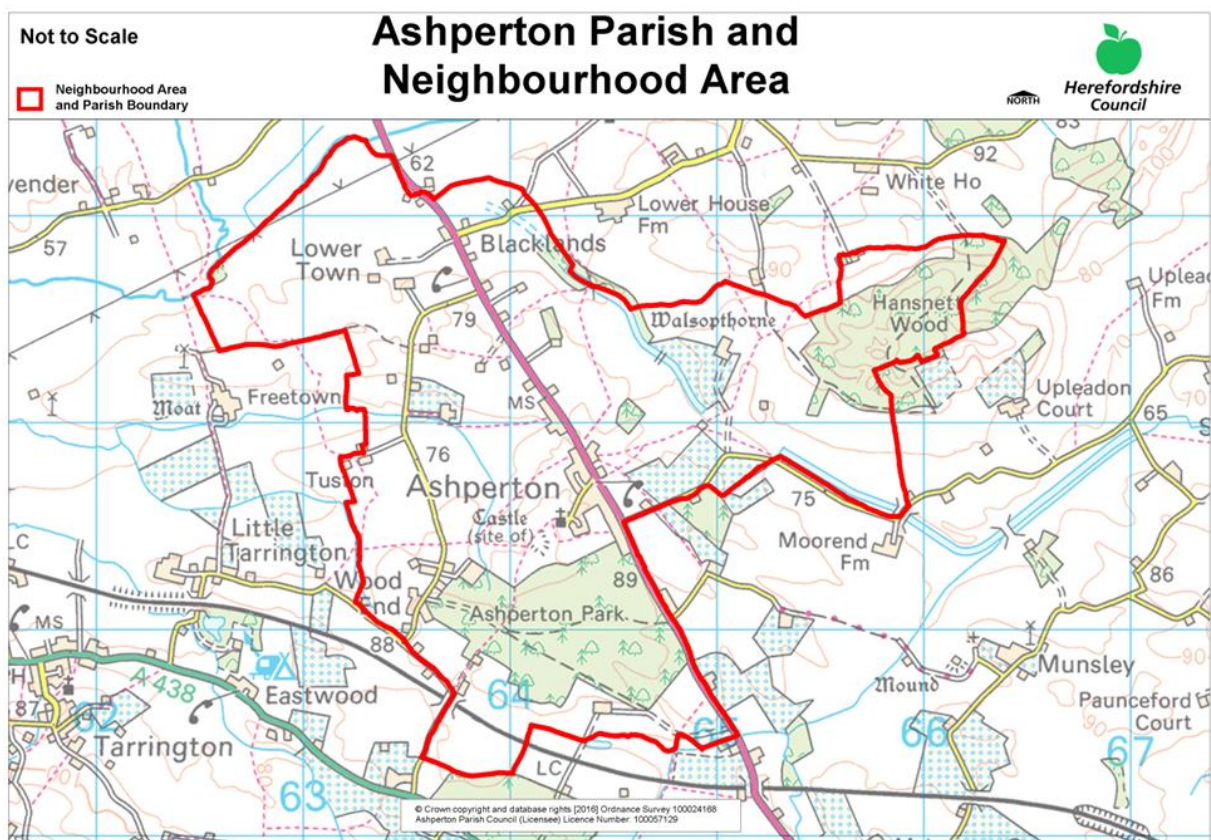
This section of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) presents factual evidence about Ashperton Parish covering a range of topics relevant to planning and development. The evidence provided here will, together with the public consultations, help shape the NDP's policies by describing the Parish's attributes and helping to identify where development would and would not be appropriate.

Further, more lengthy information is provided in Supplementary Information (available at www.ashperton.org.uk). References and/or links to website information sources are given throughout. All evidence is correct at the time of writing (spring 2017).

2.2 Parish Location and Size

Any neighbourhood development plan applies to its set 'neighbourhood area'. The neighbourhood area of this plan matches Ashperton Parish.

Ashperton Parish is located in the centre-east of Herefordshire County within England's West Midlands region. It is 12 miles east of Hereford and 8 miles west of Ledbury. Ashperton is a small and rural Parish typical of Herefordshire – one of the least populated counties in the UK. The Parish covers approximately 543 hectares (1344 acres).



2.3 Geology and Soils

The underlying solid geology of the Parish is Raglan Mudstone Formation, a mix of sedimentary siltstones and mudstones. They were formed in the Silurian period (~400 million years ago). Adjacent to watercourses are superficial deposits of alluvium - clay, silt, sands and gravels deposited by the watercourses within the Quaternary Period. Head deposits are also present in small areas.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: British Geological Survey, www.bgs.ac.uk.

The soils deriving from the above geology are 'slightly acidic loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage'. Near to watercourses the soils are 'freely draining floodplain soils'.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, www.landis.org.uk.

In terms of agricultural use, Defra's 'England and Wales Agricultural Land Classification' ranks most of Ashperton's soils as 'grade 2 very good' with areas near watercourses rated as 'grade 3 good to moderate'.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: www.defra.gov.uk.

There are no designated Local Geological Sites and no geological sites of local interest.

2.4 Hydrology

The Parish lies largely within the catchment of the River Lugg. Several streams and ditches cross through the Parish heading north to the River Frome, a tributary of the Lugg. Towards the southeast of the Parish, water, such as that overflowing from the old canal, flows southeast towards Ledbury and to the River Leadon, a tributary of the Severn.

Several areas are located in flood zones as identified by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency flood maps are presented on the following pages:



Enter a postcode or place name:

Other topics for this area...

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Surface water flooding happens when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground, but lies on or flows over the ground instead.

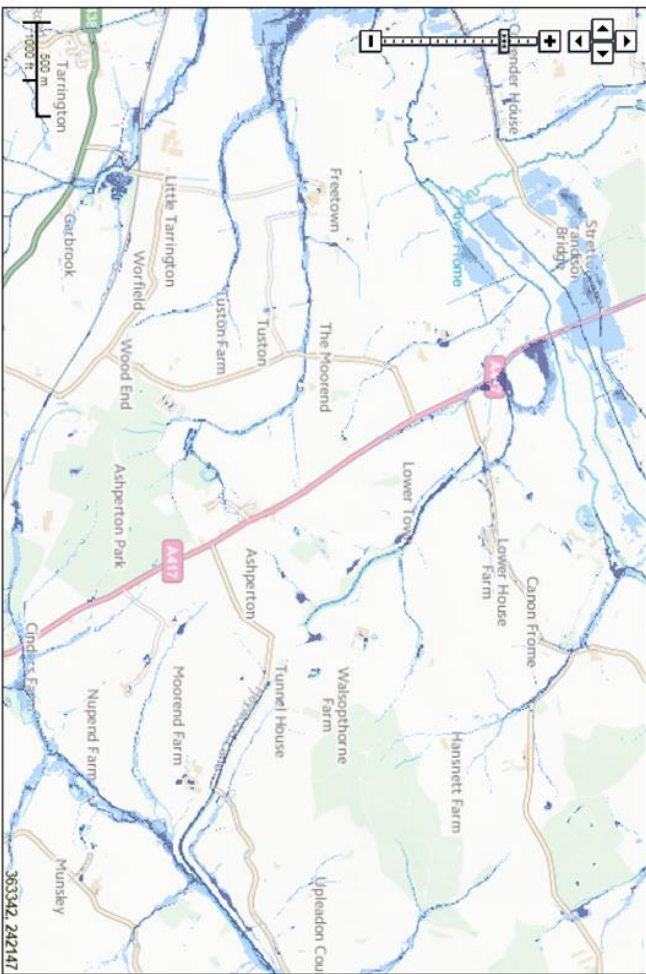
The shading on the map shows the risk of flooding from surface water in this particular area.

Click on the map for a more detailed explanation.

Map of X: 364,253; Y: 242,141 at scale 1:20,000

Map legend

- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low
 - Very Low
- Other national environmental organisations
- Natural Resources Wales Area of responsibility
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency Area of responsibility



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Enter a postcode or place name:

Other topics for this area...

[View other Interactive Maps](#)

Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea

River flooding happens when a river cannot cope with the amount of water draining into it from the surrounding land. Sea flooding happens when there are high tides and stormy conditions.

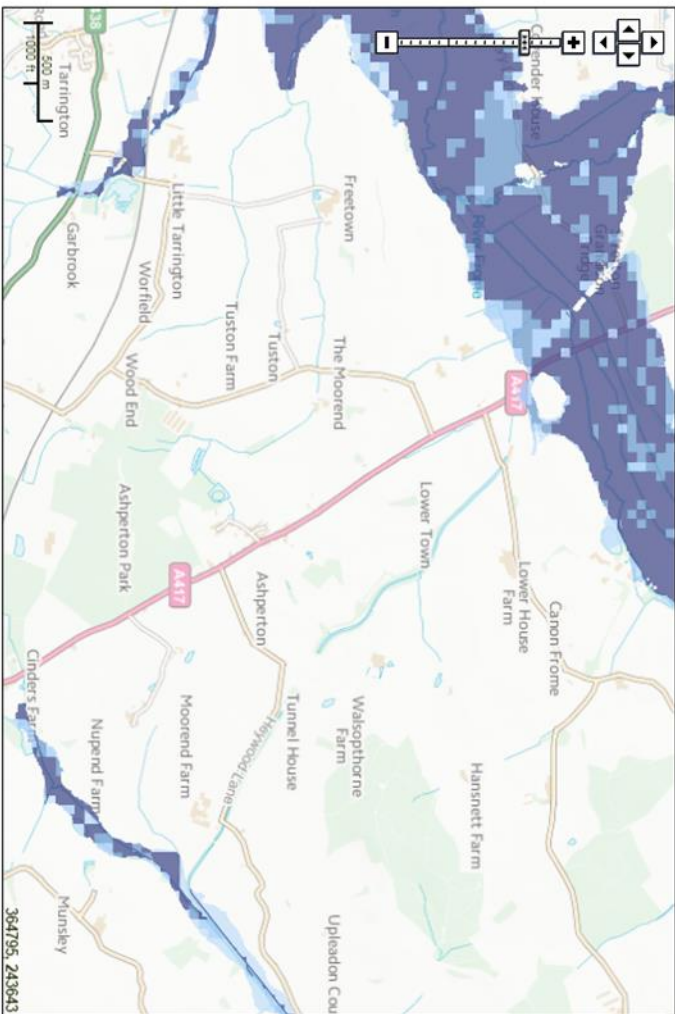
The shading on the map shows the risk of flooding from rivers and the sea in this particular area.

[Click on the map for a more detailed explanation.](#)

Map of X: 364,253; Y: 242,141 at scale 1:20,000

[Data search](#)

| Map legend | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea |
| | High |
| | Medium |
| | Low |
| | Very Low |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other national environmental organisations |
| | Natural Resources Wales Area of responsibility |
| | Scottish Environment Protection Agency Area of responsibility |



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2.5 Landscape and Views

Landscape Character

The land of the Parish is a part of a much larger plateau and as such it gently undulates across its length. The lowest part at 60m (above mean sea level) is found in the north alongside the River Frome. From here the land rises up to a height of 97m near the village school. The only significant hill is Hansnett Hill which peaks at 137m.

The wider landscape in which the Parish sits has been analysed and described chiefly by two pieces of work. The first, by Natural England, places Ashperton in the 'Herefordshire Lowlands' National Character Area (NCA). The NCA profile summarises the area as:

"The Herefordshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) lies almost entirely within Herefordshire, with small areas to the north and east in Shropshire and Worcestershire and to the south-east in Gloucestershire. It is largely tranquil and rural in character but does include the larger settlements of Hereford and Leominster. There are small dispersed settlements of hamlets and villages, many of which contain older buildings with the local vernacular of black-and-white timber-framed buildings. Restored cider barns with characteristic double doors and historic farmsteads are also common. The landscape is gently undulating with steep-sided cornstone hills in the central area dominated by ancient woodland of ash and field maple or oak and bracken. Woodland within the area is a significant landscape feature, typically on the hill tops and valley sides. Many of these woodlands are actively managed (commercially) to produce quality timber, for example Garnons Estate. The NCA is an important area for commercial agriculture supported by the fertile and high-grade agricultural soils; the farming is mixed arable and livestock. Traditional orchards are still to be found, though suffering decline, with new orchards and dwarf varieties of trees also common. The area is also important for commercial production of soft fruit under polytunnels, supplying much of the UK. Historic parklands such as at Berrington Hall have many veteran trees that are important for invertebrates.

There are many rivers in the area, the largest of which are the rivers Wye, Lugg and Frome flowing through wide, fertile mudstone valleys. Old Red Sandstone is commonly found in the west and east of the area and here the soils take on a distinctive red colour. The River Wye Special Area of Conservation is of international importance, designated for its natural river habitat, which includes species such as migratory fish (lamprey, shad and salmon), and the wide, meandering river valley creates a unique and beautiful landscape. Recreational opportunity is offered by long-distance trails including the Wye Valley Walk which links to the Shropshire Hills and the Herefordshire Trail which links the market towns in Herefordshire. Views can be expansive across to neighbouring NCAs, looking west to the Black Mountains, north to the Clun and Shropshire Hills, and east to the Malvern Hills.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 2: Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, integrating new development through the use of green infrastructure principles informed by existing heritage, geodiversity and biodiversity assets. Protect the agrarian character of the area by making the most of versatile and fertile soils to produce food while integrating semi-natural features and protecting above- and below-ground heritage assets and geological assets and reinforcing the strong sense of character.

SEO 3: Protect, manage and restore semi-natural habitats, in particular woodlands, grasslands, orchards and wet meadows within the rural and urban areas to improve ecological connectivity, biodiversity, landscape character, the historic environment, and flood water storage capacity and the ability of the landscape to adapt to the impacts of climate change. In particular, manage, restore and create new woodland, and develop connectivity in other semi-natural habitats such as the hedgerow networks and orchards.”

Defra www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles

Secondly, Herefordshire Council has undertaken a county-wide landscape character assessment and here Ashperton Parish has three landscape character types identified within it. These are: ‘Principal Settled Farmlands’ covering the northern third of the Parish, ‘Estate Farmlands’ covering the southern half and finally ‘Riverside Meadows’ covers land immediately adjacent to the River Frome. The document describes each type in detail with the key characteristics identified (available in Supplementary Information).

Above information sourced from and further information available at: Herefordshire Council. (The landscape character assessment was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2004 and updated in 2009).

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environmental-protection/conservation-and-sustainability/planning-landscape-character-assessment

Additional ‘historic landscape character assessment’ information is available from Herefordshire Council.

There is no local landscape character assessment that studies the Parish in a finer level of detail.

Views

With mixed land uses and little obstruction from buildings, the Parish has many attractive views both across the Parish itself and also, in places, to much further afield. Ashperton village and surroundings are sited on one of the highest points affording superb views of the immediate surrounding land and also of the Black Mountains to the west, Bromyard Downs to the northeast and the Malvern Hills to the east.

These views are much-cherished by local people and visitors alike. Here follows a table of the more popular views:

| View from: | Bearing: | Looking to: |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Woodend Lane | W | Black Mountains |
| Ashperton School and surroundings | E | Malvern Hills |
| The Croft | E | Malvern Hills |
| Around Hansnett Hill | SW | The Parish |

2.6 Land Use

The main land use within the Parish is agriculture. The land has historically been used for a variety of agricultural purposes many of which are still active today although the proportions of each have changed. The broad categories are estimated below:

Pasture 30%, orchards 6%, woodland 20%, arable 40%, hops 3% with buildings/gardens/roads 1%

There is no registered common land in the Parish. There is one registered village green beside the village hall. This green is owned for the most part by the Parish Council. As a registered village green it is afforded legal protection under the Commons Act 2006. Actions such as digging, access and erection of structures are only via formal application and approval from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

2.7 Settlements and Demographics

Distribution of Buildings

Buildings are distributed across the whole Parish. The main concentration is in the village of Ashperton where they are mainly located along the A417 and off Church Lane. Satellite farmsteads are frequent across the Parish, such as Walsopthorne, and some have associated cottages creating the hamlets of Wood End and Lower Town.

Building Types

Archaeological evidence suggests buildings have been present in the Parish since at least the Iron Age. Extant buildings include a large proportion of post-medieval and 17th century timber framed cottages, farms and barns. The 20th century has brought modern buildings as infill and as new developments such as the bungalows of Church Lane, Web's Orchard and The Ryders.

Listed Buildings

Historic England and Herefordshire Council recognise 28 buildings/structures as of national importance by listing them. All listed buildings/structures are identified in the Supporting Information.



Photo: St Bartholomew's Church with native Daffodils in the foreground. The Church is Grade II* listed

Built Conservation Areas and Tree Preservation Orders

There are no built conservation areas and no tree preservation orders (Herefordshire Council).

Amenities

The Parish benefits from the following amenities: village church, village primary school, village hall, a village green and a post box.

Demographics

The 2011 census recorded 226 residents at a density of 0.4 people per hectare (compared to an average density of 4.1 across England). The number of households recorded was 102.

Demographic information above sourced from and further information available at: Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011. www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

2.8 Highways, Transport and Access

Roads

The Parish is dissected by the route of the old Roman road now the A417. A main carriageway used by both local traffic and regional traffic including frequent use by HGVs. Leading from this main road are a network of minor roads and tracks that reach most parts of the Parish.

Public Transport

The Parish has only a very limited weekday bus service. No other forms of public transport are available.

Public Rights of Way and Open Access Land

The Parish is criss-crossed by Public Rights of Way all of which are public footpaths giving the public access on foot to most parts. Paths are concentrated around Ashperton Village. There are no public bridleways and no byways.

The village green (0.1ha) has open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000.

2.9 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

Archaeological features from a variety of ages are present across the Parish. These features are unique opportunities from which to study our past and help tell Ashperton's story. Many archaeological features are recorded by Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record (see Supplementary Information), with the most important assets designated as Scheduled Monuments. These are protected by law and are of national importance.

A selection of the heritage assets includes:

- Earthworks of medieval fortified manor house and moat 'Ashperton Castle' (Scheduled Monument)
- Roman Road
- Many 17th century timber-framed houses
- Canal and associated tunnels
- Medieval ridge and furrow, parkland and enclosure at 'The Croft'
- World War Memorial
- Deserted medieval village north of Ashperton Church
- Prehistoric trackway
- Church of St Bartholomew
- The old village water pump

There is no Registered Parkland in the Parish.

Many of the more long-standing forms of land use are maintaining cultural traditions such as traditional orchard management (often undergrazed by livestock) and hay meadows.

2.10 Ecology

The Parish contains a mixture of habitats typical of traditional, rural England with mixed farmland interrupted by small woodlands, watercourses and a good network of hedges that connects many habitats together.

There are no internationally or nationally important designated sites (these would include: RAMSAR, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, World Heritage Sites, National Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest).

The Parish does contain 5 sites designated as County Wildlife Sites. These are shown on the map below. These are: the old canal, Hansnett Wood, River Frome, Ashperton Park and the boundary of Eastwood.

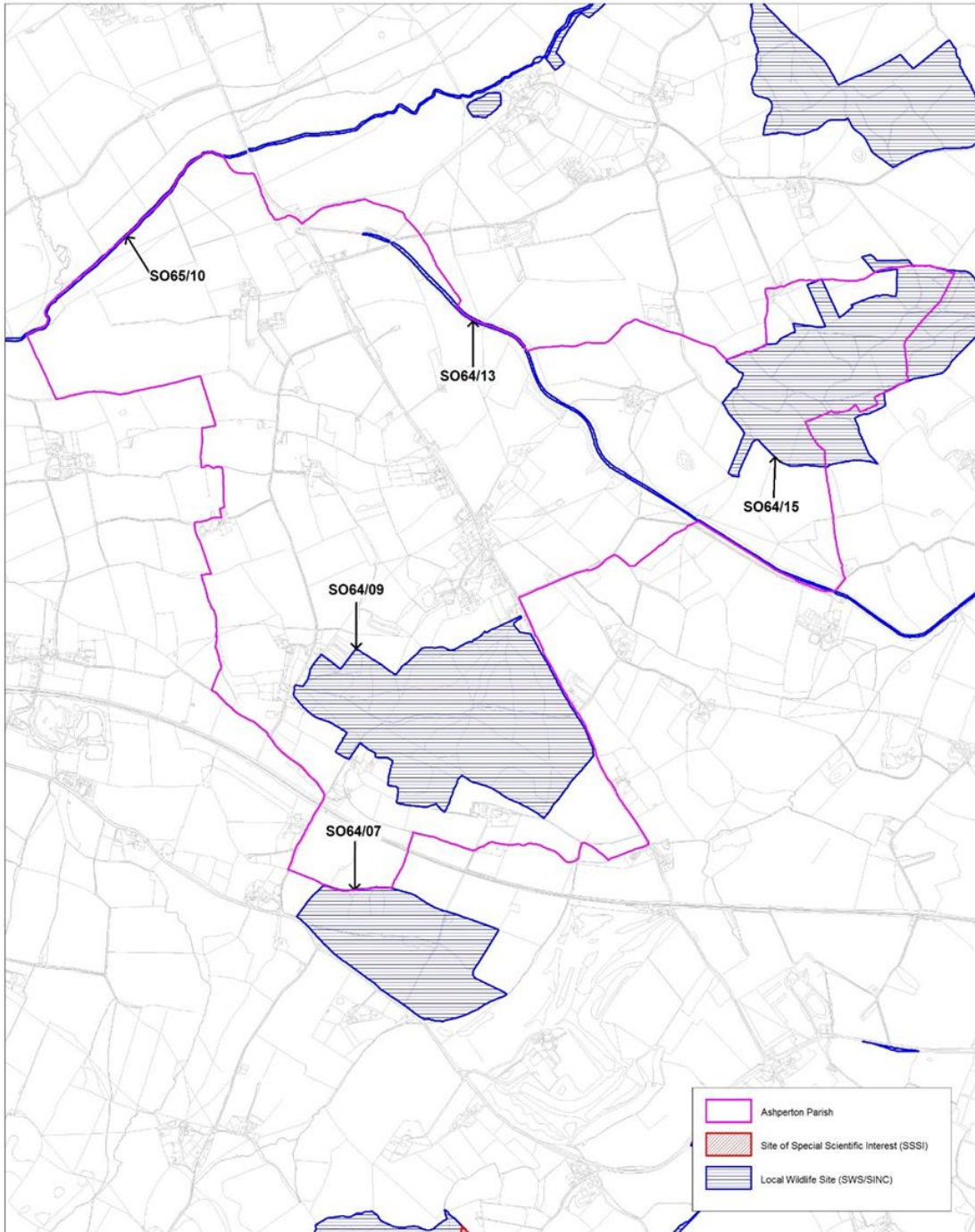
Several 'priority habitats' are present, as identified by Natural England. These include: species-rich grassland, ponds, ancient woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows. Some of these habitats have been mapped by Natural England and presented in the Supplementary Information (priority habitats as recognised by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, Section 41).

In addition to the 5 Local Wildlife Sites there are 8 further important sites with several priority habitats which have been identified. These are:

| Site name / area: | Grid Ref: SO | Habitat / species: |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Church Coppice | 641414 | Ancient woodland |
| Orchard at Woodend | 636413 | Old orchard Species-rich grassland |
| The Croft and adjacent field | 645418 | Species-rich grassland Veteran trees Bats |
| Village Green pond and nearby ponds | 644418 | Pond Great crested newts Palmate newts Common frog |
| Orchard at Hackell's Green | 636421 | Old orchard |
| Woodland off Dognall Lane | 645420 | Ancient Woodland |
| Woodland and stream | 638417 | Ancient Woodland Stream |
| Church field | 642414 | Wild daffodil meadow |



Photo: Old orchard with species-rich grassland including Green-winged Orchids at Wood End.



Map showing designated sites
within Ashperton Parish

SCALE 1:14,500



HEREFORDSHIRE
BIOLOGICAL
RECORDS
CENTRE

Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre
Fir Tree Lane
Rotherwas
Hereford
HR2 6LA

Telephone: (01432) 261538
Email: hbrc@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Information above sourced from and further information available at: Herefordshire Biological Records Centre and Natural England/Magic www.magic.gov.uk

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre collate and hold records of species in the county. Certain species and their dwellings are protected by law, these and priority species must be taken into account in any planning process.

Ashperton Parish is home to many legally protected species including:

Bats (7 species), Badgers, Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly, Violet Helleborine and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The area is particularly notable for its amphibian and reptile populations – Toad, Common Frog, Slow Worm, Adder, Palmate Newt, Smooth Newt and Grass Snake have all been recorded. Great Crested Newts are particularly numerous here, the latter spending summer in the many ponds and the remainder of the time on land. All birds and their nests are protected from reckless disturbance/destruction.

HBRC species information is presented in the Supplementary Information.

Veteran/ancient trees

The Parish is home to many notable trees some of which hold great cultural and ecological value too, these are our veteran trees and several of these are ancient. Of particular note is the collection of ancient oaks present from the village hall to Tunnel Cottage. These trees are estimated to be about 5-600 years old (born in ~1450!).

2.11 Tranquillity

Overall the Parish enjoys excellent levels of tranquillity – peace and quiet, natural landscapes and dark night skies. The rural nature of the Parish coupled with a lack of light pollution from street lighting and sensitive domestic lighting is key. The A417 does bring a corridor of noise and light pollution but this varies with traffic numbers through the day. Tranquillity improves local people's lives contributing to a sense of wellbeing and 'getting away from it all'.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) have assessed and mapped tranquillity across the UK. Ashperton is recorded as higher or medial scores in tranquillity across the Parish. Herefordshire is the top ranked darkest English County. (Source night blight mapping England's light pollution and dark skies. CPRE.)

Information above sourced from and further information at: CPRE <http://maps.cpre.org.uk/>

Section 3: Vision and Objectives

3.1 Background

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. At the heart of the Framework there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The Framework explains that "there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- Economic: contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- Social: supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- Environmental: contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."

As a consequence the planning system should be supportive of economic growth and policies in local and neighbourhood plans should ensure that that development that is sustainable can be approved without delay. Paragraph 15 of the Framework explains that all plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.

The Vision and Objectives were developed from opinions of residents following an initial questionnaire in August 2015 and community consultation in October 2015, and a second questionnaire and community consultation in April 2016.

3.2 The Vision

To be a parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people are valued and where there are homes and facilities to meet the needs of a sustainable rural community with a high quality environment.

This will mean that by 2031:

- There is sufficient housing to meet the needs of local people and which is of mixed types, well designed, in keeping with local character and suitably located in small clusters
- Existing local facilities including the village hall and school are supported and enhanced;
- Future developments don't impact on heritage features of the village, particularly the Church, moat and village green and are sympathetic to the local landscape and views;
- Roads and footpaths, particularly the A417 are safer, well maintained and in good condition; and
- New residents are welcomed, people feel safe and community involvement and spirit is actively encouraged.

3.3 The Objectives

Housing

Policies incorporated in the Plan will ensure that new housing contributes to a sustainable and balanced community, in particular through:

- providing a mix of properties in terms of size and tenure;
- designs that are sensitive to and in keeping with our local character;
- satisfying locally identified needs for all life stages;
- controlling the level of new housing such that there are sufficient numbers but without over-provision; and
- controlling the rate of development such that small clusters of houses are developed at a gradual rate.

Environmental Sustainability

The Plan will contribute towards sustainable development through:

- protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, especially the Parish's heritage, habitats and open spaces, safeguarding agricultural land;
- maintaining a high quality landscape, built environment and settings of settlements;
- reducing flood risk; and
- moving towards being carbon neutral.

Roads and Traffic

Within the Plan will be proposals to reduce the effects of traffic on the community so that:

- residents are safe using local roads and footpaths;
- traffic can move freely but without excessive speed;
- new development does not make road conditions worse; and
- footpaths and cycle lanes are created to provide carbon free transport alternatives.

Community Services and Facilities

To foster community spirit by:

- supporting the maintenance and improvement of existing services and facilities; and
- promoting the expansion of fibre optic broadband and mobile phone coverage in all parts of the Parish.

Section 4: The Policies

4.1 Structure of the Policies Sections

The following Sections 4 through 9 contain policies derived from the vision and objectives set out in Section 3. The views of the residents, as expressed in questionnaire surveys and live consultations, were fully taken into account in the development of these policies.

It is important that development applicants and decision-makers consider the policies as a whole in order to assess whether a proposal would be acceptable. Every policy has been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Hereford Core Strategy.

“The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.

Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations.

Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they certainly will be worse if things stagnate.

Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment.

Our historic environment- buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives rather than withers.

Our standards of design can be so much higher. We are a nation renowned worldwide for creative excellence, yet, confidence in development itself has been eroded by the too frequent experience of mediocrity.

So sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

The planning system is about helping to make this happen.”

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP (then) Minister for Planning, Forward to the National Planning Policy Framework.

| Policy Area | Code | Section Number |
|---------------------------|------|----------------|
| Housing Policies | H | 5 |
| Design Policies | D | 6 |
| Transport Policies | ST | 7 |
| Supporting Local Business | SB | 8 |
| Environmental Policies | E | 9 |
| Renewable Energy Policies | RE | 10 |

To aid identification, policies have been coded as indicated in the table.

4.2 Policies to Meet the Objectives

| OBJECTIVE | POLICIES |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Housing | H1: Number of New Houses H2: Settlement Boundary H3: Housing Mix and Tenancy H4: Type of Housing H5: Rural Exception Sites D1: Design Appearance D2: Scale and Phasing of Development D3: Technical Design |
| Environmental Sustainability | E1: Landscape E2: Tranquillity E3: Cultural Heritage E4: Wildlife and the Natural Environment E5: Flooding and Water Management RE1: Small Scale Renewable Energy RE2: Commercial Renewable Energy |
| Roads and Traffic | ST1: Accommodating Traffic Within the Parish |
| Community Services and Facilities | SB1: Supporting Local Business SB2: Work Space Development SB3: Change of Use SB4: Provision of Broadband and Mobile Telephone Services |

Section 5: Housing Policies

5.1 Introduction

The Parish of Ashperton lies in rolling countryside approximately five miles to the north west of the market town of Ledbury. The main settlement of the village is to the east of the Parish and is bisected by the A417 which is a major road between Ledbury and Leominster. It provides the amenities of a school, village hall, and church. There is no shop. Ashperton village is where most new housing has been built since 2001.

Residents living in the Parish and other people working here depend on motorcars for transport. Buses do run along the A417 but the service is limited and at best is only twice daily.

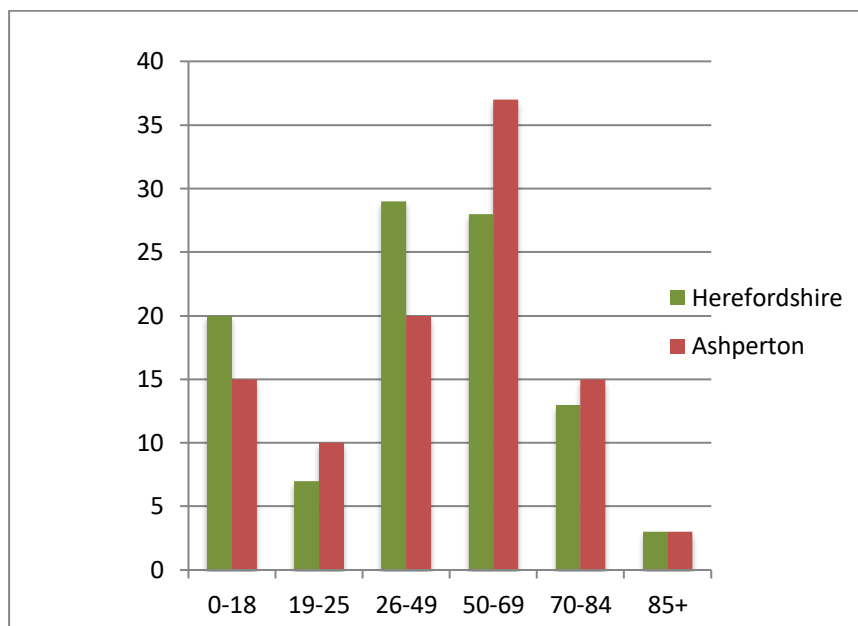
In September 2015 102 homes were recorded throughout the Parish, in Ashperton village and in the hamlet of Woodend.

73% of the homes are grouped in the two main settlements; Ashperton Village and Woodend.

Away from the A417 all the settlements are connected by a network of minor roads. There is a regular but infrequent bus service to Ledbury and to Hereford with one bus- stop in Ashperton. Private transport is essential for many residents.

The population of the Parish remained static between 2001 and 2011 with a resident population of 226. This differs from the population for The County of Herefordshire where the population grew by 5%.

The Parish has a resident population that is older than the percentage for the County of Herefordshire as a whole with over 35% of the population being between 50 and 69 (see Chart opposite).



Regarding housing in the Parish, in 2011 there were:

- 91 detached houses, representing 89% of the housing stock, which is over 4 times the average for England of 22%;
- 11 attached houses;
- 0 terraced houses;
- 99 owner-occupied dwellings, i.e. of the total number of households and well above the average for England of 64%;
- A very small number of privately rented; and
- 0 homes rented from registered housing providers or the local authority.

Housing prices, especially of large executive homes, in Ashperton village and other villages around the town of Ledbury tend to be at the top of the range compared with properties in Ledbury. The average sale price of properties between May 2103 and May 2016 was £350,000 www.rightmove.co.uk compared to the national average for March 2016 of £214,811 <http://static.halifax.co.uk/assets/pdf/mortgages/pdf/March-2016-Halifax-House-Price-index.pdf>

The community has indicated that it considers the building of new houses is necessary to meet the needs through to 2031 and to sustain the long term well-being of Ashperton. Opinions have been expressed that the Parish needs more young families to create a better age balance, which in turn would require more homes that are affordable. When asked what type of housing was needed in the Parish, family homes and starter homes were selected as most needed. Such homes would address the needs of those seeking to downsize and those wishing to start a home in the area where typically they previously lived with their parents. Most residents would prefer to have limited housing development with the priority given to small sites of up to three houses and infilling within the proposed settlement boundary. In the absence of sufficient suitable land

within the present settlement boundary, building needs to be considered on suitable adjacent land. The strong response to the residents' questionnaires provided a representative view of the community with respect to housing matters, covering the number, sort, type, style and location. Each of these categories is described in more detail in the following sections.

5.2 Housing Numbers

The Herefordshire Core Strategy for 2011 to 2031 requires a minimum housing growth target of 14% for the Housing Market Area (HMA) of Ledbury, which encompasses the Parish of Ashperton. As an action arising from the Examination of the HC Core Strategy in February 2015, Herefordshire Council (HC) revised the method of calculation used to determine the actual numbers of dwellings required in the rural areas.

Accompanying Notes:

- The baseline year of the Core Strategy is April 2011 and this is the date which has been used to calculate proportional growth figures. These statistics are based on the Local Property Gazetteer (April 2011). This calculation accurately reflects Parish boundaries.
- Commitments (planning permissions granted) and houses which have been built between April 2011 and May 2016 have also been provided in the table below. You will see that this amount has been discounted from the revised indicative target.
- See the Ashperton neighbourhood planning website www.ashperton.org.uk

| Parish | Settlements | Number of Households in Parish | % growth in Local Plan Core Strategy | Minimum Number of New Houses required to 2031 | Housing Completions 2011 - 2014 | Housing commitments as at 1 January 2017 |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Ashperton | Ashperton, Woodend | 102 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 14 |

Therefore the total minimum number of houses that should be delivered between April 2015 and 2031 is 14 houses. Windfall development includes non-allocated development that may come forward both within and outside settlement boundaries.

The commitment of 14 dwellings includes the 10 dwellings to the north of Ashperton Village Hall but there is currently no indication of any firm commitment as regards a start date on site.

It should be noted that in order to become a formalised element of the HC Local Plan, this Plan is required to demonstrate that the housing numbers can be delivered in the timescales described above, as prescribed by the HC Core Strategy.

Supporting Statement

This policy sets out the basis for housing development over the plan period that is considered the most appropriate given the level of need, compliance with the HC Core Strategy Policy RA1 including Ashperton HMA 14% growth requirement, site considerations and the aim to achieve an improved population structure.

Policy H1: Number of New Houses

A minimum of 14 dwellings in the Parish should be delivered in the Plan period of June 2016 – 31st March 2031.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire Project (August 2014)

A large majority of residents did not wish to see major new housing developments in the Parish because they feel that this would inevitably lead to a significant change in the character of Ashperton. The Residents' Survey Report 71% of respondents stated their view that new development should be developments of 3 properties or less.

Over 90% of the respondents believed that such development should take place gradually over the Core Strategy period.

5.3 Areas Considered for New Development

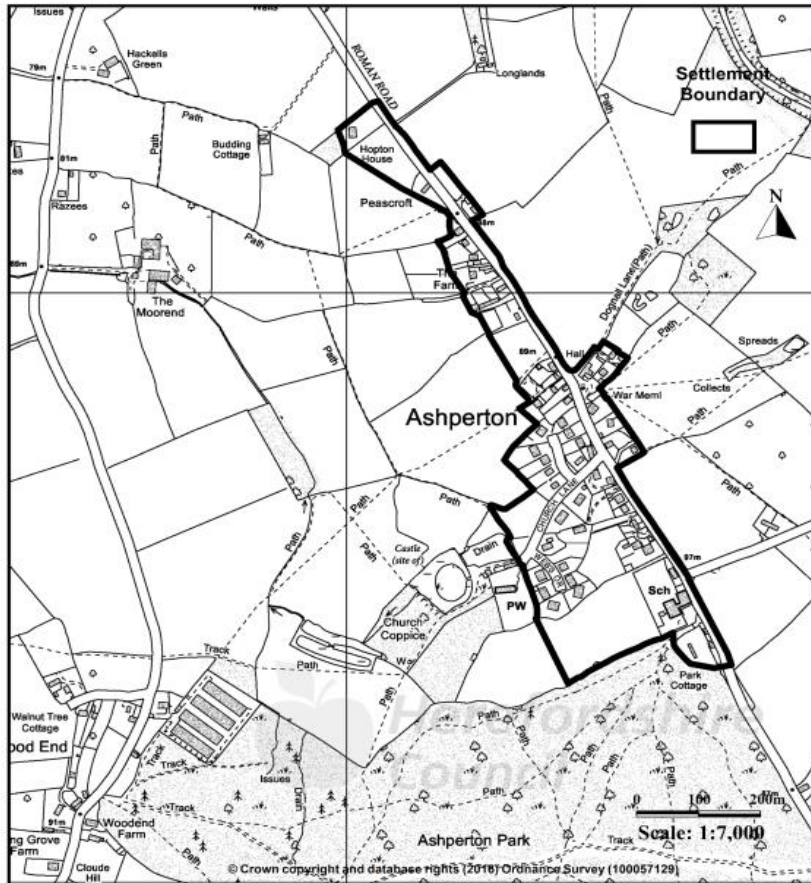
HC Core Strategy Requirements

In accordance with Policy RA1 of the HC Core Strategy residential development will be located within or adjacent to the main built up area(s) of the settlements. This will ensure that unnecessary isolated, non-characteristic and discordant dwellings do not arise which would adversely affect the character and setting of a settlement and its local environment.

In the case of Ashperton the one "settlement" considered in Policy RA1 of the HC Core Strategy is the core of Ashperton Village.

Ashperton Village

Ashperton village is expected to be the main focus for housing development because it is the largest centre of population and provides the community amenities and local services. The Village does not have a current settlement boundary and in April 2016 residents were questioned over the establishment of a settlement boundary around the village core. 70% of residents were supportive of the establishment of the proposed settlement boundary (see over)



Policy H2: Settlement Boundary

A Settlement Boundary should be established as per the plan below for the Plan period of June 2016 – 31st March 2031.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire Project (April 2016)

70% of residents agreed that the proposed Settlement Boundary was appropriate for the Village.

5.4 Sites for Development Ashperton Village

Following a call for sites the steering group received 11 proposals to include sites for residential development in the NDP. This is in addition to the three sites within the village with extant planning permissions.

Sites with extant planning permission.

P.1 Land to the north of the Village Hall

Despite overwhelming local opposition this site was granted outline planning permission P152041/O for 10 dwellings on 24 August 2016.

P.2 Land adjacent to 44 and 45/46 Ashperton Road

This site was granted planning permission P132420/F for 3 dwellings. A new application P/164097/F was approved by the Council on 22 February 2017. This development is currently under construction.

P.3 The Cottage, Church Lane

Planning permission for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to a live/work unit (Ref P153022) was granted on 30 December 2015.

There are therefore extant planning permissions for 14 new dwellings.

Sites for inclusion in the NDP

Of the sites put forward the following are included within the plan:

S.1 Land between Peasecroft and Hopton House

This site is within the approved settlement boundary and lies to the west of the A417. It has a road frontage of some 95m and an area of around 0.4 hectares. The site is level grazing land with an existing field access direct onto the A417 within the 40 mph speed limit. The site is set behind a mature hedgerow. Subject to limited cutback of the hedgerow, visibility splays of 2.4m by 300m plus would be achievable in both directions. Mains water and electricity would be available with foul drainage via a private system with outflow to the west. It is considered that the site could readily accommodate 4 dwellings, possibly in two stages.

S.2 Land opposite Peasecroft

This site comprises former garden land of Peasecroft, albeit that it is to the opposite side of the A417. Being outside of a 'built-up area' the site may therefore be classed as previously developed land, the re-use of which is encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework.

The site has a road frontage of some 70m and an area of some 0.2 hectares. There is an existing access to the A417 which currently serves 'The Old Police House'. Whilst the site is above the A417, there is a substantial belt of trees and hedge to the roadside. The site could accommodate up to 3 dwellings at a density of 16 dwellings per hectare. A good standard of highway visibility would be achievable in both directions. Mains water and electricity would be available with foul drainage via a private system with outflow to the east.

S.3 Land behind Milestone Cottage and Peasecroft

Although described as behind the 2 dwellings this site is predominantly behind their gardens which run alongside the road. The site could be developed with 2 dwellings without unacceptable impact on the occupiers of the existing properties. There is an existing access between Peasecroft and Milestone Cottage with good highway visibility in both directions. The site is approximately 0.35 hectares but the level of development would be constrained by the juxtaposition of the existing dwellings. [Mention of pre-application discussions?] Mains water and electricity would be available with foul drainage via a private system with outflow to the west.

S.4 Land adjacent to 'The Farm'

The owners of 'The Farm' propose a new dwelling and associated stabling on land to the south of 'The Farm' which is currently occupied by agricultural and equestrian buildings. Access could be via the existing track to the south of 'The Farm' or via the access to site S.3 across the agricultural holding. The proposal comprises a dwelling and equestrian buildings, the latter set to the rear of the site away from the existing dwelling, and would constitute the use of previously developed land. The development could be readily accommodated on the site. Mains water and electricity would be available with foul drainage via a private system with outflow to the west.

Sites S.1 to S.4 would accommodate a total of 10 additional dwellings. Also a potential 2 further properties on Church Lane.

Sites put forward but not included in the NDP

N.1 Land to the south of 'The Old Police House'

This land was originally included in application P152041/O but the application was amended following opposition to the scheme due to the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the village. The first stage consultation on the Plan revealed that the majority of respondents were wholeheartedly opposed to the development of this site and, therefore, it could not be included in a Draft Plan going forward to a local referendum for approval.

N.2 Land to the rear of Holmlea

This land comprises backland development which was the subject of a previous application DCNE2006/0401/O for outline permission for two dwellings. This was refused by Herefordshire Council and dismissed on appeal Ref APP/W1850/A/06/2019811. Whilst circumstances, and

national policy, have changed since 2006, one of the reasons for dismissal of the appeal was that highway visibility from the only means of access onto the A417 being severely restricted in both directions and way below that required by the Highway Authority. Without some resolution of that problem the site cannot be supported in the Plan.

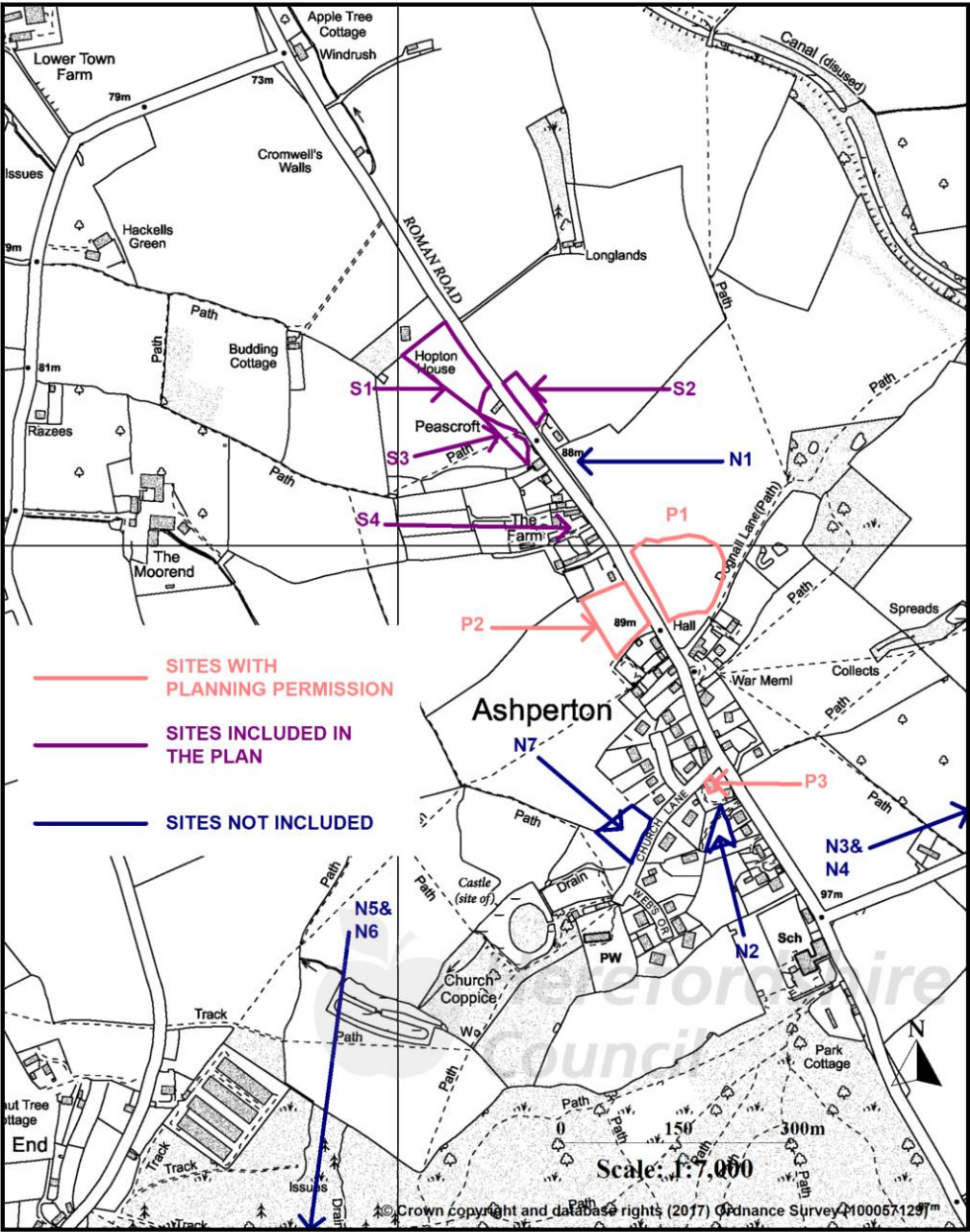
N.3 & N.4 Sites in Heywood Lane

Two sites for potential residential development were identified in Heywood Lane. These lie outside of the settlement boundary and their development would therefore be contrary to the Hereford Core Strategy with which the NDP must comply. (However see Policy H5 below).

N.5 & N.6 These two sites relate to the conversion of accommodation currently used for bed and breakfast and the conversion of a former agricultural building at Woodend. As with the sites in Heywood Lane, these lie outside the settlement boundary.

N.7 Church Lane

An extensive site to the north-west of Church Lane has been put forward as having potential for development. However much of the site is clearly outside the settlement boundary and part, towards the Church and the moat, would be constrained by archaeological considerations. Although it may be possible to accommodate one or two dwellings on land without archaeological constraints and within the settlement boundary highway visibility limitations at the junction of Church Lane with the A417 would almost certainly make further development off Church Lane unacceptable. The site, has therefore, not been identified as a proposed development site within the plan.



5.5 Housing Mix and Tenancy

Supporting Statements

1. Residents have not expressed a need for affordable homes. The most recent Housing Needs Survey demonstrated a minimal demand. The 2008 Housing Needs Survey for Ashperton indicated 5 residents requiring affordable housing before 2013. Actual demand should be taken into account when a planning application is under consideration.

Policy H3: Housing Mix and Tenancy

Proposals for development on sites of more than 10 dwellings should take into account local housing needs and should normally provide a tenure mix of up to 40% of Affordable Homes. No sites have come forward or are being proposed that would deliver affordable housing.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

92% of respondents considered that the new homes to be built should be sold at market prices. There was less support for other types of development

- Homes for registered housing providers let (16%)
- Sheltered homes to buy (26%)
- Homes with live-work potential (69%)
- Self-build homes, (42%)
- Homes with shared ownership (42%)
- Starter Homes (71%)
- Sheltered homes to rent. (19%)

The 2014 Residents' Survey confirmed a need for an increase in housing, in particular starter homes for young families.

5.6 Type of Homes

Background

Recent developments in and around the area of Ledbury provide an indication of the type and style of housing that is currently being offered. The most recent developments in Ashperton village have been undertaken or are proposed by private developers and have provided infill development mix of higher cost housing with farm/commercial buildings converted into family homes.

The National Planning Policy Framework divides affordable housing into three categories: social rented for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime; affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require no more than 80% of the local market rent; and intermediate homes for sale and rent, provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels.

The Herefordshire Core Strategy requires the provision of 40% affordable homes in developments of more than 10 dwellings. It is unlikely that any such proposals will come forward during the plan period. It is therefore doubtful that there would be any provision of 'affordable' homes, as defined in the Framework within the settlement boundary. Nevertheless there is a clear need to provide suitable housing for first time buyers, including those who may be eligible for financial assistance via national schemes. Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy H2 enables provision for affordable housing outside of villages, in areas where there is generally a restraint on open market housing, so as to help meet affordable housing needs in rural areas in perpetuity. Policy H5 mirrors Core Strategy Policy H2.

Policy H4: Type of Housing

Proposals for the following types of dwelling will be approved where they comply with other policies in the NDP

- a) Family homes (three bedrooms or more) ;
- b) Starter homes (two bedrooms);
- c) Live/Work Units;

Policy H5: Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for affordable housing schemes outside the settlement boundary may be permitted on land which would not normally be released for housing where:

1. the proposal could assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing; and
2. the affordable housing provided is made available to, and retained in perpetuity for local people in need of affordable housing; and
3. the site respects the characteristics of its surroundings, demonstrates good design and offers reasonable access to the range of services and facilities within Ashperton.

In order to enable the delivery of affordable housing some market housing may be permitted as part of the development to subsidise a significant proportion of affordable housing provision. However, evidence will be required – by way of a financial appraisal, in order to demonstrate that the proposed scale of market housing is that required for the successful delivery of affordable housing.

Community Feedback from the Questionnaire Project

The community has identified a need for new housing to meet a broad range of requirements. When asked what type of housing should be built, the options most strongly supported were:

- Family homes (3-bedroom),
- Starter homes (2-bedroom),
- Living/working homes
- Executive homes

Supporting Statements

1. These policies seek to address the needs of those seeking to downsize and those wishing to start a home in the area where typically they previously lived with their parents.
2. If the Parish is to thrive, the balance of age has to be redressed and the working age population has to grow again.
3. Consultation has shown that residents want a range of housing which, whilst suiting the needs of an ageing population, also caters for the needs of young first-time buyers and families.
4. Consultation has also shown a marked preference for increasing provision of starter homes,
5. Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is a necessary part of growing sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. In Ashperton a well-balanced population is essential for the ongoing viability of local facilities.

Section 6: Design Policies

As the Framework emphasises, good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Policies within the plan set out design policies for development to ensure that any new development is of a high quality, is visually attractive and maintains the strong sense of place and character of Ashperton and its landscape setting.

Ashperton is a small village with a distinctive rural character that is highly valued by residents and visitors. Criteria to protect and maintain that character and the landscape setting of the village are essential to prevent ill-designed development which would cause substantial harm to that character.

The response to the community questionnaires overwhelmingly demonstrated the value placed on the character of Ashperton resulting from the gradual growth of the village with dwellings sharing a common vernacular of building materials and basic design but with a variety of details.

Along the main road, with few exceptions, the dwellings are 1½ or 2 storeys in height and constructed in sandstone, brick or timber frame with brick or wattle and daub infill. For the most part roofs are gable ended and are covered in clay or slate tiles. Two residential properties are thatched. 10 houses in the core of the village are listed Grade II as being of special architectural interest. The majority of dwellings in the core of the village are detached, with a few properties attached to another of dissimilar appearance or, in one instance, to the Village Hall. 'Mirror-image' pairs of semi-detached houses do not feature in the core of Ashperton Village.

St Bartholomew's Church and the site of Ashperton Castle are set away from and below the main road down Church Lane, off which run 'The Ryders' and 'Web's Orchard', two 20th Century developments of 7 and 6 detached bungalows respectively. These properties, along with other recent development comprising 2 bungalows in Church Lane and two fronting the A417 together with a pair of detached 2 storey houses towards the northern end of the core village, are atypical of the well-established and valued character of the village and are more representative of suburban development.

Policies relating to the design and appearance of new housing development within the plan area should respond to and respect local character, including the variety of dwellings resulting from the gradual and organic growth of the village, and maintain the long established sense of place. The technical aspects of design should ensure that the designs function well in the long term, protect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access.

Ashperton is poorly served by public transport and therefore residents are reliant on the private motor car to access employment and services with the result that there is inevitably a high level of car ownership which is expected to remain the case for the foreseeable future. There is therefore a need for adequate provision of car parking spaces for residents and visitors with safe access to the public highway.

Policy D1: Design Appearance

Proposals for all forms of new residential development should be of a design that reflects and respects local character and the distinctive rural character of Ashperton.

Development proposals shall contain specific design measures that will:

- a) Be sympathetic to and respect the existing character and appearance of the village using an appropriate mixture of materials and architectural styles incorporating locally distinctive features, for example local sandstone and/or timber framing and typical red brickwork;
- b) Ensure that affordable housing is visually indistinguishable in character and appearance from market housing;
- c) Respect the scale, density, bulk and grain of existing development;
- d) Relate to existing properties in respect of height being no more than 2 storeys high unless specific conditions justify designs of up to 3 full storeys;
- e) Does not detract from the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties with regard to privacy and overlooking, overshadowing, outlook or noise and disturbance; and
- f) Preserve as far as practicable existing trees, hedgerows, ponds and other established landscape features and make provision for additional tree planting with locally native species.

Policy D2: Scale and Phasing of Development

In order to preserve the character of the village and prevent unsympathetic suburban or over dominant development:

- a) Individual developments of more than three dwellings will not be supported unless justified by exceptional circumstances;
- b) Developments of more than two dwellings should incorporate a variety of detail design features.

Policy D3: Technical Design

All proposals for development should comply with policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and statutory requirements and should:

- a) Provide safe and convenient access to the public highway;
- b) Provide adequate off-street parking, taking into account local car ownership levels, the paucity of public transport and the lack of on-street parking together with any site specific circumstances;
- c) Include measures to maximise sustainability including the orientation of buildings, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, cycle storage and recycling storage;
- d) Incorporate sustainable drainage systems taking into account the low permeability of local subsoils;
- e) Integrate new homes into the community supporting a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment;
- f) Include measures to minimise levels of noise disturbance and air pollution arising from traffic on the public highway.

Section 7: Sustainable Transport Policies

The A417 road runs diagonally through the Parish from south east to north west. It forms the boundary with the Parish of Munsley in the south east from Stony Brook to Heywood Lane. Leading off the A417 two short sections of lane head eastwards – Heywood Lane (C1156) for 0.8 km and Canon Frome Lane (C1154) for 0.4 km. To the west, Church Lane serves the more recent developments of The Ryders and Webb's Orchard and Woodend Lane (C1151) leads through the settlement of Woodend and, after a t-junction with Little Tarrington Common Road, heads towards the A483. These Minor C roads and lanes serve farms and as such have to accommodate vehicles of all sizes.

A short section of the Hereford/Ledbury railway line passes through the south of the Parish. The nearest station is Ledbury, over 5 miles away, where London Midland and First Great Western trains can be caught.

Policy ST1: Accommodating Traffic Within the Parish

Measures will be promoted, in association with Herefordshire Council, to reduce the impact of traffic upon amenity and to address community concerns. The impact of development proposals on the existing environment should be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that they are sustainable in terms of infrastructure, road safety and the standards required for a peaceful and safe rural parish.

- a) Development proposals should ensure that there will be safe access onto the adjacent roads and adequate off street parking for residents and visitors;
- b) Development in the Parish does not create a significant increase in the volume of traffic on roads that do not have sufficient safe capacity;
- c) Residential and environmental amenity is not adversely affected by traffic;
- d) New and improved footpaths are provided, not just within new developments but with appropriate extensions to create safe pedestrian routes to the key locations in the Parish;
- e) Roads within new developments should be wide enough to allow vehicles (especially emergency vehicles) to pass each other without either using the footway; and
- f) New development is designed to have positive benefits for the storm-water drainage systems in the adjoining roads.

Supporting Statement

Road traffic is a matter that greatly concerns most residents. All new developments should prioritise any possible transport measures which promote sustainable impacts for benefit to residents. There is one regular weekday bus to Ledbury with a one hour forty minutes turn around. There is no return bus from Bromyard. Access to the frequent regular bus service between Ledbury and Hereford is either by walking about 1.8 km via AP13 and AP6 or bicycling to a stop with racks: about 3.5 km to Poolend or about 5 km to Tarrington. Transport by private vehicle is a requirement for residents and should be recognised in any new development.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire (August 2015)

In answering the questionnaire:

- 82% of respondents considered the current roads through the village as unsafe
- 64% that local pavements, footpaths and public rights of way insufficiently well maintained
- The speed and density of traffic along the A417 were of particular concern as well as the narrowness of the pavement which leads from the school to 39 Ashperton Road.
- Respondents indicated support for speed cameras, speed reactive signs, extended lower speed limits and a 20mph zone outside the village school.

Section 8: Supporting Local Business

8.1 Background

Figures from the 2011 census show that over a third of Parish residents over the age of 16 had degree level qualifications and 69% of working age residents (16-74) were employed. Most residents in employment had a profession or were working at senior level.

Information taken from the 2015 questionnaire would suggest that this percentage has fallen as a higher proportion of residents are now retired, and those who are in employment either currently work from home or commute outside of the Parish:

- Hereford: 17
- Market Towns: 11
- Village: 14
- Outside Herefordshire (less than 25 miles): 9
- Outside Herefordshire (more than 25 miles):13
- Home: 29
- None of the above: 48

Within the Parish, agriculture and horticulture is seen as the main commercial business, but residents work across a variety of sectors as indicated by the responses from the 2016 questionnaire:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| ● Education: 5 | ● Food Industry: 1 |
| ● Healthcare: 4 | ● Police: 1 |
| ● Service Industry: 4 | ● Property Management: 1 |
| ● Retail: 2 | ● Engineering: 1 |
| ● Financial / Accountancy: 2 | ● Transport: 1 |
| ● Farming, Agriculture and Horticulture: 4 | ● Government: 1 |
| ● Office Work: 2 | ● IT: 1 |
| ● Consultancy: 2 | ● Retired / Unanswered: 27 |

8.2 Business Potential

Ashperton Parish is predominately serviced by the A417 interlinked by narrow lanes. Despite the existence of this main road, there isn't the necessary infrastructure to support medium to large scale commercial development, and the public transport available for potential employees is almost non-existent. In addition, the open, rural feel of the Parish would make this kind of development inappropriate. As the results from the 2015 questionnaire show, 18% of residents would most like to encourage development that includes more work/live units and small workshops to support cottage industries and small businesses.

Tourism throughout Herefordshire is worth £469 million to the local economy (2011). Over 4.7

million visitors come to the county for short stays to take advantage of the outstanding countryside, rich heritage and culture. The delivery of services for this industry will be supported where a proposal capitalises on existing assets, develops sustainable walking, cycling or heritage routes, benefits the local community and the economy and is sensitive to the county's natural and built environmental qualities and heritage assets. The 2016 questionnaire indicated that 73% of respondents are in favour of encouraging tourism, leisure and crafts, whilst 50% wish to encourage more accommodation.

The Parish is located close to the market town of Ledbury and the Malvern Hills and has an opportunity to become a small additional base in which to stay, and from which to enjoy the many visual attractions within the Parish and beyond. Part of the disused Herefordshire Gloucestershire canal corridor which is the subject of a long term restoration project, runs through Ashperton Parish. The aim is to re-open the canal link between Hereford and the Severn at Gloucester, terminating in a canal basin in Hereford with some sections already having been restored. The recreation, tourism and economic potential of the project are recognised and the canal corridor will continue to receive protection from development through Policy E4.

Policy SB1: Supporting Local Business

Development proposals, particularly which sustain or increase local business activity and offer employment in the Parish, will be supported provided that:

- a) The development can be accommodated within the rural character of the Parish;
- b) The development does not adversely affect environmental amenity. This will include protecting biodiversity, in particular ensuring no significant effects upon any sites designated Special Areas of Conservation; the landscape, the water environment; and the historic environment;
- c) The road network, access and parking provisions should be sufficient for any increase in traffic;
- d) External storage and paraphernalia should be effectively screened;
- e) Noise and light pollution is minimal; and
- f) Proposals for home working should have no loss of residential amenity such as increased traffic generation, noise or light pollution.

Supporting Statement

Residents would like to encourage the development of existing and new businesses, particularly for tourism and their related business opportunities as long as the requirements of Policy SB1 are complied with.

Residents feel strongly that new employment and small business should be encouraged but not to the detriment of residential or environmental amenity.

Community feedback from Questionnaire (May 2016)

The Residents' Questionnaire Survey, asked residents to indicate from a list of 12 types of employment which ones should be encouraged locally. The five categories receiving strongest support were:

- Tourism, leisure and crafts: 73%
- Tourist Accommodation: 50%
- Pubs, restaurants, cafes: 46%
- Food and drink production: 39%
- Community Services: 31%

Feedback from the community indicates that there are factors which would assist and encourage both growth and the setting up of new ventures. The top five of these were:

- Faster broadband: 81%
- Better mobile phone coverage: 51%
- Better parking facilities: 47%
- Homes for rent or sale with separate workshop space: 35%
- Homes for rent or sale with integral workshop space: 32%

8.3 Work Space Development**Background**

Working from home, or in a work space adjacent to home, can promote economic, social and environmental sustainability in terms of:

- Better use of time by reducing travel time
- Lower carbon emissions
- Reduced travel costs
- Opportunities to combine work and family activities

Policy SB2: Work Space Development

In order to deliver sustainable economic growth balanced with population growth the following will be supported:

- a) New development that includes linked residential and small scale employment space, including the provision of live/work units, as long as there is no adverse impact on the character of settlements and the amenity of nearby residents
- b) Proposals for home working, where there is no adverse effect on residential amenity, including traffic generation, noise or light pollution.

Supporting Statement

Residents would like to encourage the development of existing and new business and employment opportunities within the Parish but there is no desire to see new industrial development.

There is strong support from the business community for the provision of housing that would encourage working from home.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire (August 2015)

- 76% of respondents wish to encourage working from home subject to policy SB2.
- 71% of respondents would support the construction of outbuildings for small scale business purposes subject to policy SB2.

8.4 Change of Use

Background

Ashperton Parish has very little in existing employment sites and so the potential for change of use is minimal. However, 49% of residents support the protection of existing employment sites where possible from change of use.

Policy SB3: Change of use

Proposals for change of use of existing buildings will be supported, provided that:

- a) The re-use will strengthen the local economy or
- b) It can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable i.e. that the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least one year for that, or any other suitable employment or service/trade use away from business use; and
- c) The change of use can be achieved in compliance with all other policies in this Plan

Supporting Statement

This policy seeks to ensure that the building stock is retained with appropriate re-use in such a way as to support and strengthen the local economy and in sympathy with the character of the Parish.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 78% of residents would support a change of use from residential to a mixed use of residential and some other small scale specific use subject to policy SB2.
- 62% of residents would support proposals for change of use of redundant commercial premises to residential use subject to policy SB3.

8.5 Provision of Broadband and Mobile Phone Services

Background

The availability of faster broadband and improved mobile phone coverage in the Parish was recognised as highly desirable by the residents with 81% wanting faster broadband and 69% wanting better mobile phone coverage.

'Fibre to the cabinet' is now available in the core of the village via the new cabinet opposite the school. Further facilities will be needed to provide fast broadband to those parts of the Parish too distant from that cabinet.

Policy SB4: Provision of Broadband and Mobile Telephone Services

Proposals to enhance the present broadband and mobile telephone equipment infrastructure will be supported through:

The introduction of appropriate super-fast broadband and mobile telephone equipment that will provide high quality internet connectivity for business and residential users; and

- a) The requirement for new development proposals to include provision for the connection to high speed broadband by means of suitable ducting within the development site, linked to the local/national network.

Supporting Statement

To allow local businesses to operate efficiently, access to the best communication systems should be made available.

Section 9: Environmental Policies

The overall objective is to conserve and enhance the Ashperton landscape and all component parts both natural and cultural.

9.1 Landscape character, views and the wider environment

The rural landscape character is strong, giving a sense of place and contributing towards Herefordshire's distinctiveness. Views of local countryside and of hills further afield are much-cherished by local people.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 84% of respondents strongly agree that unspoilt countryside is important to them.
- 95% of respondents think that future development should be in keeping with the existing landscape and setting.

Policy E1: Landscape

Housing development will be supported in locations set out in the NDP where:

- a) Sites must exhibit the capacity to absorb building without serious harm to landscape character or notable views.
- b) All new developments should seek to enhance the local landscape character and visual amenity.
- c) All proposers of new development will be required to consult with the Parish Council as well as HC to demonstrate, with reference to the County Landscape Character Assessment, how their proposals respect and accord local character.
- d) Planting schemes should only include species that are site native.

9.2 Tranquillity

The busy A-road brings significant noise and light pollution to the central corridor of the village. The remainder of the land is quiet and peaceful countryside. Light pollution is minimal, thanks to no street lighting and sensitive, neighbourly private lighting. This means residents benefit from dark night skies. Tranquillity improves people's quality of life and is an attractive feature of a rural Parish such as this but it is easily lost.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 'Peace, quiet, a rural feel and tranquillity' are often highlighted. Together they are the top (38%) most liked quality of the Parish.
- 89% of respondents wanted the NDP to protect dark night skies.

Policy E2: Tranquillity

- a) The importance of tranquillity will be respected throughout the Parish as a priority.
- b) Street lighting is not supported.
- c) Proposed new private outside lighting will be subject to rigorous scrutiny to ensure it is sensitive, neighbourly and protects our dark night skies.

9.3 Cultural Heritage

The Parish has many cultural heritage assets including archaeology, historic buildings and traditional land uses. Both add to the rich landscape and provide a record of Ashperton's history. Many assets are of national importance and have legal protection.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 77% of respondents voted for enhanced protection of historic features.
- The Church, the moat, the village green and listed buildings are all repeatedly highlighted as important heritage assets.

Policy E3: Cultural Heritage

- a) Development should be sure to protect and enhance our cultural heritage.
- b) Building should not take place on archaeological features and should be sensitive to their settings.
- c) Development should include a watching brief by the county archaeology service.

9.4 Wildlife and the natural environment

Ashperton Parish supports many important habitats and species many of which are legally protected. These contribute positively towards our local landscape and public wellbeing. All public bodies, including Parish Councils, have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making.

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 77% of respondents voted for protection of local wildlife.
- The 'local woods' and 'the fields either side of the village hall' are repeatedly highlighted as important.

Policy E4: Wildlife and the Natural Environment

- a) Development will only be supported where it has a nil or positive effect on the Parish's habitats and species.
- b) All planning applications for new dwellings and for non-residential development should be supported, before determination, by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in accordance with CIEEM guidelines.
- c) Any unavoidable damage will require mitigation measures within the Parish.
- d) Development on the locally important sites identified will not be supported.

9.5 Flooding and water management

Environment Agency mapping shows that parts of the Parish are affected by flooding from either surface

Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 'Areas at risk of flooding' are highlighted just once in the questionnaire feedback as a location where development should not occur.

Policy E5: Flooding and Water Management

- a) Development in areas of river flooding will not be supported.
- b) Plans for new developments must include a 'Flood Risk Assessment' to clearly demonstrate the provision of adequate drainage solutions that do not create or exacerbate flooding and avoid pollution of the environment.

Supporting Information available on the Parish Council website www.ashperton.org.uk

- 1: Landscape Character Types.
- 2: Historic Environment Record (cultural heritage).
- 3: Listed buildings/structures.
- 4: Priority habitats.
- 5: HBRC species data.

Section 10: Renewable Energy Generation

Renewable energy makes a fundamental contribution to sustainability. The National Planning Policy Framework stresses, at paragraph 97, that local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. Policies should be designed to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual aspects.

Wherever practicable, all new development should include measures to provide on-site electricity generation and solar or ground source heating for internal consumption. Proposals for the installation of renewable energy equipment on existing, non-designated, and new domestic premises will be supported provided that the equipment is designed and sited so as to minimise its effect on visual amenity and residential amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.

Proposals to generate electricity from renewable or low carbon sources on a commercial scale will be supported where there is no undue harm to natural, historic or residential amenity.

In response to consultation on commercial scale, land based, solar electricity generation, the overwhelming response was that sensitive areas should be protected, particularly areas around the Village Green, Church, Moat and areas visible from the A417 and public rights of way. Particular attention would need to be paid to the visual and landscape impacts of any proposal as well as the residential amenity of local residents with particular regard to outlook.

However, in the case of commercial wind power proposals, permission should only be granted on sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan or other Development Plan Document as suitable for wind energy generation and it can be demonstrated that, following consultation with local residents, identified planning impacts have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community. Consultation has indicated that the majority of the local respondents were opposed to commercial scale wind turbines in the NDP area, citing that larger turbines would be visually intrusive and would dominate the landscape, given the small scale of the Parish. No area can, therefore, be designated as suitable for commercial wind energy generation and proposals would not have the backing of the local community.

Policy RE1: Small scale renewable energy

Proposals to deliver renewable and low carbon energy for domestic or in-house electricity generation or heating will be supported provided that:

- a) Equipment is designed and sited so as to minimise the effects on visual amenity and residential amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties; and
- b) The proposal does not affect the character, appearance or setting of any heritage asset, including listed buildings.

Policy RE2: Commercial renewable energy

Proposals for commercial scale wind turbines of over 30m hub height or over 50kW output will not be supported due to the adverse

Proposals for other commercial renewable energy proposals, where electricity or heat would be exported, will be supported **provided that:**

- a) The proposal does not adversely affect any designated heritage or natural asset;
- b) The proposal does not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in respect of noise and disturbance, outlook or air or water pollution;
- c) The proposal does not cause significant harm in terms of visual amenity or harm to the character of the landscape; and
- d) The proposal can be connected to the electricity infrastructure or to a local specific end user of heat in an efficient and environmentally acceptable manner.

Section 11: Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Ashperton Parish Council will implement the Neighbourhood Development Plan by examining Planning Applications in accordance with National Policy, the guidelines laid down by Herefordshire Council and the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy, together with the policies of the plan itself.

The Plan will form the basis for Ashperton Parish Council to respond to planning applications, and for using any funding that may come to it through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if a scheme for the CIL is available.

Ashperton Parish Council will be guided by the parishioners, and seek their input and involvement in the Plan ensuring a successful implementation. Cooperation from Herefordshire Council, developers and other agencies with relevant members of the Parish will shape the projects for the future; always with the Parish involvement driven by Ashperton Parish Council.

Regular review of the plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is not a rigid programme governing the future development of Ashperton but a living document that will be reviewed on a regular basis and at least every three years. The plan will be implemented over the plan period and will provide a blueprint in direction for sustainable change and flexibility meeting the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Consultation with the Community as circumstances change will be crucial to ensure that the valued characteristics of the Parish are safeguarded.